

CODE FOR THE ROAD

FOLLOW THE RULES. FOLLOW THE LAW.



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texting while Driving Enforcement in April

Bismarck – Law enforcement agencies in North Dakota will use traditional and innovative methods to detect and cite texting drivers during April. Enforcement teams will participate in the national high visibility enforcement campaign, *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* The national enforcement effort is scheduled during the observance of Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April.

Multiple vehicles and trained observers who may or may not be uniformed officers will coordinate with their agency officers to observe texting while driving violations.

Composing, reading or sending any electronic message or using a communications device to access the Internet while driving is illegal in North Dakota for drivers of all ages. Violating the state's texting law, which became effective on August 1, 2011, can be costly. The fine is \$100. The law applies to any driver of a vehicle in a traffic lane, even while stopped at a red light or in a construction zone.

"Texting while driving is not only illegal in North Dakota, it's also dangerous and irresponsible," said Sgt. Luke Gardiner, traffic safety officer with the Bismarck Police Department. "When you allow yourself to be distracted from the job of driving, you're making your social conversation more important than the lives and property of other people," Gardiner added.

Nationally, distracted driving statistics portray a grim picture: In 2014, an estimated 3,179 people were killed (10 percent of all crash fatalities) and an additional 431,000 were injured (18 percent of all crash injuries) in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

"Distracted driving crashes are on the rise, because people are so attached to their phones. With this increased enforcement effort, it allows us to reach out to more motorists and educate them about the importance of driving distraction-free before they hurt themselves or somebody else," said Gardiner.

Participating law enforcement agencies include police departments in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Minot, Valley City and Watford City. The Burleigh County Sheriff's Department and the University of North Dakota have also scheduled extra enforcement for texting while driving.

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The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) administers federal grant funding for texting while driving enforcement as part of an overall effort to prevent deaths and injuries on North Dakota roads.

Learn more about traffic safety initiatives at dot.nd.gov, ndcodefortheroad.org or join the conversation on the *Code for the Road* Facebook or Twitter page. Families are invited to create memorials for those who have died in crashes in North Dakota at ndcodefortheroad.org/memorial.

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